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The Great War Machine.

One gets some vivid idea of the need of relief from the awful strain of war preparation in Europe from recent correspondence in the *London Mail*:

"When you have been half an hour in Metz and Strasburg you see that you are in the entrenched camp of an army ready for war. Infantry, cavalry, artillery and the rest of two complete army corps are all equipped as if for instant active service.

Touch the right button in Berlin, and in half an hour 30,000 men will be marching from Metz, and within twelve hours 100,000 men—the frontier field force of Alsace-Lorraine—will be crossing the border; while the system in accordance with which the railroads tap all the great cantonnements of Germany, and then converge on to the frontier, will land half a million men near Metz in three days. In a week two and a half million men will be on and beyond the frontier; in a week four million Germans will be under arms.

In Metz and Strasburg stores and food and fodder lie ready in the magazines, the transport animals stand harnessed by the wagons. All the appliances and munitions of modern war are to hand and would be on the road in a few minutes.

The outside circle of defence at Metz is a chain of forts, some of them all but invisible. These are armed with none know how many heavy guns—for none may enter but the great staff itself. This circle is three miles from the city, its centre; the forts are about three miles apart, and so the fire from each would cover the space which lies between them. That is to say, except you pass through the

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fire-zone or smash one of the links of the chain you can assuredly not enter to attack Metz itself. Each fort stands on a hill sloping smoothly and gently downwards towards France.

No enemy can approach within four miles of the chain of forts unless he first demolishes the forts, and as these are dug from the inside of the hills and offer no broader target than the muzzles of their guns you will conclude that Metz is practically impregnable. I approached one of these forts as close as a sentry would allow me. The garrison of two regiments of infantry and one regiment of artillery live in an excavated barrack which is entirely underneath the surface of the ground and completely hidden from view. As seen from the French side nothing whatever shows except one long mound, from which protrude rows of loopholes of various sizes. Even as seen from the rear you can get no more idea of what is within than you know what are the contents of a coal mine when you have only stood above the shaft. All I knew was that there, within the earth, were hidden nearly three thousand men with three thousand rifles and about a hundred heavy guns—not to speak of machine guns. All I saw were mounds of smooth, green earth, out of which stuck the tips of the muzzles of their guns, pointing westwards, and outside wall upon wall of flanking entrenchments (to meet the emergency of the fort being turned), and in rear of each fort magazine after magazine of shells, each magazine being cut out of the earth just like an Egyptian tomb.

In the barracks, even in winter, every man is up at four, and from dawn to sundown the recruit of the first year is drilled and drilled and drilled. From six to twelve it is the "goose-step" in various evolutions—singly, by fours, by sections, by companies, by battalions. Hour after hour, it is nothing but the raising of legs till they are at right angles to back, erect as posts, while subalterns and captains direct, correct, repeat.

In the afternoon, from one to six, there is an incessant musical drill; the men, keeping their feet firm sway their bodies backwards and forwards, or to left and right, or else they advance or retire on tiptoe, or on all fours, or they double to their front or to their rear.

Those of more than a year's ser-

vice shoot at the butts, and shoot and shoot again all the morning till they have attained a certain standard of marksmanship in every possible attitude; or else they are drilled in less elementary formations; or else they garrison the outpost forts. And in the evenings all are instructed by the non-commissioned officers out of the official manual at field service; and thus till nine, when the long day is done.

And so the great war-machine is kept oiled and smooth-running, and the German army marks time.

Joseph A. Allen of Medfield, Mass., in a letter to the *Woman's Journal*, gives the statistics of the increase of crime in Massachusetts after the civil war. In 1865 there were 6,507 commitments for crime; in 1866, 9,384; in 1869, 9,994; while by 1898 the number of commitments had risen to 28,855.

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